

Louisiana Department of State Civil Service

Sample Questions for
Series 9000 (COAST)
Clerical,
Office &
Administrative
Support
Test

This booklet contains *SAMPLE QUESTIONS ONLY*.

None of the questions in this booklet are actual test questions. They are samples and are not intended to cover all topics which may appear on the test.

Studying this booklet *WILL NOT NECESSARILY IMPROVE YOUR TEST SCORE.*

April 2009

PREPARING FOR THE CLERICAL, OFFICE & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TEST

WHAT IS THIS TEST?

The Clerical, Office & Administrative Support Test (COAST) is a written exam given to all applicants for a variety of clerical and administrative support jobs.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS ARE ON THIS TEST?

The test measures the basic abilities common to all clerical and administrative support jobs. In addition, it includes a behavior assessment section which is scored separately. The areas covered by the test questions are described below:

1. CUSTOMER SERVICE: 30 QUESTIONS

These test questions are designed to assess knowledge of effective methods and techniques and related human relations abilities associated with providing customer service. Each question describes a situation that might occur on the job, and you are asked the best way to handle the situation.

2. SPELLING: 40 QUESTIONS

The spelling test is designed to resemble a proofreading task. You are presented with a passage. Each line of the passage is considered one test question. You are to read the passage and indicate how many spelling errors are contained in each line. In some cases, a spelling error will consist of the use of the wrong form of a word that has several correct spellings. The different correct spellings of such words have different meanings, for example “to”, “two”, and “too”. Be sure that you look for these kinds of errors.

3. READING WITH UNDERSTANDING: 25 QUESTIONS

These questions test your ability to read and understand written information. All information you need to answer a question in this section is contained in each item. You are encouraged to read each item as often as you wish.

4. BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT: 40 QUESTIONS

The questions included in the Behavior Assessment ask for information about you and your background. These kinds of questions are often asked during an oral interview. For years, employers have been using interviews to relate personal history, preferences, and attitudes to job success. The Behavior Assessment attempts to do the same and includes questions which have been shown to be related to job success. It has been found that successful employees tend to select some answers more often than other answers, while less successful employees tend to select different answers. The questions in the biographical inventory do not have a single correct answer. Every choice is given some credit. More credit is given for answers selected more often by successful employees.

HOW DO I USE THIS BOOKLET?

This booklet contains a sample of the different types of questions on the test. None of the sample questions will be on the test, but they are very similar to the actual questions.

After the end of the sample questions for Customer Service, Spelling and Reading Comprehension, you are given the correct answers to each question and told why it is the best choice. You should carefully study each sample question to become familiar with questions of the same type on the test.

Do not be discouraged if you are not able to answer some of the sample questions correctly. However, if you feel you need more practice in a certain subject area, your local library may have reference materials to help you.

The Behavior Assessment questions presented in this booklet are for illustrative purposes only. The answers have not been linked to the answers of successful employees; therefore, we cannot designate any “correct” answer(s).

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

1. To avoid the risk of arriving too late to be admitted to the test, allow extra time for traveling to the test center. Notify Civil Service in advance if you will require special testing accommodations due to a disability.
2. Pay close attention to the instructions given by the monitor at the beginning of the test session.
3. Read the instructions included in the actual written exam test booklet carefully. These instructions are given to help you and should be followed very closely.
4. Use the clock or your watch to keep track of the time.
5. Read each question carefully. Then read all of the answer choices to each question before deciding which is the best choice.
6. If you are having a hard time answering a question skip that one and come back to it later if you have time.
7. Try to answer each question even if you must guess at the answer. The final grade will be based only on the number of correct answers. There is no penalty for guessing.
8. Be sure you mark your answers properly on your answer sheet and NOT in the test booklet. You will only be given credit for answers you mark on the answer sheet.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. A customer walks into the office and asks for the deadline to file a permit application. You do not know the answer. It would be best for you to do which of the following?
 1. Tell the person what you think the answer might be.
 2. Refer the person to your supervisor.
 3. Say that you are not allowed to give out that information to the public.
 4. Inform the person that you don't know but will find out.

2. A person approaches you and tells you of many complaints he has about your department. You should first:
 1. assume that he is just blowing off steam and ignore his criticisms.
 2. check into the legitimacy of the complaints.
 3. ask for advice from your supervisor on the best way to handle the person.
 4. regard the complaints as accurate and take immediate steps to correct them.

SPELLING

Directions: This section consists of a passage of written material. The lines are numbered in the left margin. You are to read the passage and indicate how many spelling errors are contained in each line by using the following key:

Key

- A = The line contains no spelling errors.
- B = There is one (1) spelling error in the line.
- C = There are two (2) spelling errors in the line.
- D = There are three (3) or more spelling errors in the line.

3. The main reasons for in-service training are to improve the work being done by
4. employees in their present jobs and to meet the system and program goals of the
5. agency. It is the responsibility of managers to support and encourage the use of
6. skills learned in training classes. In-service training will be done during normal work
7. hours and will be paid for by the employer.

READING WITH UNDERSTANDING

8. It is important that names and addresses are data entered in a consistent form. Therefore, here are some basic guidelines. The entire name and address should be written in capital letters. No punctuation marks will be used in the address lines. All states should be abbreviated with the standard two-letter abbreviation system used by the United States Postal Service. Finally, there should be only one space between any two fields of data.

According to the above passage:

1. The word "Street" in an address should be abbreviated "**St**".
 2. State names are abbreviated using the first two letters of the name of the state.
 3. There should never be two spaces between the first and last name fields.
 4. Punctuation marks are never used in the name line.
9. In order for an office to have a record of its correspondence, letters must be maintained in the proper files. Four copies should be made of every letter. Two of these copies should be paper clipped together and placed in the box for filing in the Records Section. One copy should be placed in the general office correspondence file, and one copy should be retained by the person who is signing the letter. The original letter is then mailed to the recipient.

According to the above passage:

1. The original letter is maintained in the office files to serve as evidence when a letter has been altered by a recipient.
2. Two copies of a letter are needed by the Records Section for filing.
3. A copy of each letter is retained by the person who typed the letter.
4. Correspondence files are maintained by offices to protect members of the staff from law suits.

BIOGRAPHICAL INVENTORY

Directions: You may only mark one response to each question. It is possible that none of the answers applies well to you. However, one of the answers will surely be more true (or less inaccurate) for you than others. In such a case, mark that answer. Answer each question honestly. The credit that is assigned to each response on the actual test is based upon how successful employees described themselves when honestly responding to the questions.

10. Generally, in your work assignments, would you prefer:
- A. to work on one thing at a time.
 - B. to work on a couple of things at a time.
 - C. to work on many things at the same time.
11. In the course of a week, which one of the following gives you the greatest satisfaction?
- A. Being told you have done a good job.
 - B. Helping other people to solve their problems.
 - C. Coming up with a new or unique way to handle a situation.
 - D. Having free time to devote to personal interests.

Answers and Explanations

Public Contact

1. The correct answer is **4**. It is best for you to be honest and admit that you do not know the answer and will find out the answer to the customer's question rather than make up an answer or refer the customer to someone else in the office.
2. The correct answer is **2**. The first step to take is to determine how valid the individual's complaints are. Then, you can decide whether further action is needed or the complaints were unfounded and require no further action.

Spelling

3. The correct answer is **B**. There is one spelling error. The word "improve" is misspelled as "inprove".
4. The correct answer is **B**. The word "there" is not spelled correctly for the use of the word in this sentence. In this case, we need the plural, possessive pronoun "their", so one spelling error is found in this line.
5. The correct answer is **D**. There are three misspelled words in this line: "responsibility", "support" and "the".
6. The correct answer is **A**. This line contains no spelling errors.
7. The correct answer is **B**. This line contains one spelling error. The word "paied" is misspelled and should be "paid".

Reading with Understanding

8. The correct answer is **3**. Statement 1 is incorrect because the abbreviation includes lowercase letters. Statement 2 is incorrect because the passage specifies a different way to abbreviate state names. Finally, the passage does not address the issue presented in statement 4.
9. The correct answer is **2**. The last sentence of the passage states that the original letter is mailed to the recipient, so we know that statement 1 is incorrect. The passage also does not provide information to support either statements 3 or 4.